

Spring 1-15-2014

ENG 3009G-002: Myth and Culture

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**English 3009: Myth and Culture
Spring 2014**

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Office hours: TR 2: 00-3:30 p.m. and W 3:00-5:00 p.m.

Course Description:

This course will involve an in-depth look at the myths and culture of **three Asian** countries, namely, **India, China, and Japan**. In the Indian segment, we will read the **Hindu** and the **Buddhist** (the Hinayana or the Theravada) myths. The study of Hinduism will include the **Vedic** and **Puranic** (The *Mahabharata* and *Bhagavad Gita*) Mythology. The Chinese segment will include the study of **Confucianism** and **Taoism**. Finally, the Japanese segment will focus on **Zen Buddhism** and **Shinto** Mythology. The primary orientation of this study will be to develop a clear understanding of (a) **philosophical** and **religious interpretations** of the concepts of creation/origin of the world, death, divinity, fate, the ultimate goal/s of human life, etc., and (b) **social systems** and **moral/ethical values** of these cultures. Whenever possible, we will also compare the commonalities and differences among these three Asian cultures and mythologies.

Course Requirements:

Active preparation and class-participation – 15%
Mid-term exam – 25%
Final exam – 25%
One research paper, 5-6 pages – 35%

Text Required:

Ananda Coomaraswamy and Sister Nivedita. *Myths of the Hindus and Buddhists*
Eknath Easwaran. *The Bhagavad-Gita*
R.K. Narayan. *The Mahabharata*
Victor Mair. *Tao Te Ching*
Walpola Rahula. *What the Buddha Taught* (Reference)
Wing-Tsit Chan. *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*

Course Policies:

Discussion (participation) is an important component of this course. Your presence in class is important for everyone, but especially for you. Three unexcused absences will bring your final grade down by 1%. Three late appearances equal one unexcused absence.

Papers are due at the beginning of the class on the day they are due. For each day that the paper is late, the letter grade will fall by one full grade: an 'A' essay due on Friday will be an 'F' by next Thursday. ALWAYS MAKE COPIES AND BACK UP YOUR WORK!

Plagiarism Policy (English Department)

Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism – “The appropriation or imitation of the language, of ideas, and/or thoughts of another author and representation of them as one’s own original work” (Random House Dictionary of the English Language) – has the right and responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignment of a grade of F for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office.

Information for Students with Disabilities

If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Coordinator of the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.

Tentative Syllabus.

Week 1

1/14 – Introduction to the Course, Myth: Definition, form, content and function

1/16 – Introduction to Aryan Ideology and Vedic Mythology (handouts)

Week 2

1/21 – Continued

1/23 – Introduction to *The Mahabharata* (Chapters 1-5 from R.K. Narayan’s *The Mahabharata*)

Week 3

1/28 – Continued (Chapters 6-11 from R.K. Narayan’s *The Mahabharata*)

1/30 – Continued (Chapter 3 from Ananda Coomaraswamy’s *The Myths of the Hindus and Buddhists*, pp. 123-125)

Week 4

2/4 – *Mahabharata* (continued, Chapters 12-16, and Epilogue from R.K. Narayan's *The Mahabharata*)

2/6 – *Mahabharata* (continued)

Week 5

2/11 – *Mahabharata* (continued)

2/13 – Review for Midterm Exam

Week 6

2/18 – Midterm Exam

2/20 – *Bhagavad Gita* (Chapters 1-3 from Easwaran's *The Bhagavad Gita*)

Week 7

2/25 – continued (Chapters 4-6 from Easwaran)

2/27 – continued, Introduction to Buddhism (Chapter 5 from Ananda Coomaraswamy's *The Myths of the Hindus and Buddhists* pp: 245-250, 261-276, and 283-285).

Week 8

3/4 – Buddhism continued (material on e-reserve)

3/6 – continued

Week 9

3/18 – Buddhism continued, Introduction to Confucianism from Wing-Tsit Chan's *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*: Chapter 2: The Humanism of Confucianism, pp. 14-18, The Analects: #1:3, p. 20, # 2:3, p. 22, # 2:5 and #2:7, p. 23, # 4:5 and # 4:6, p. 26, # 6:28, p. 31, # 11:11, p. 36, # 12:1, p. 38, # 12:2, and # 12:7, p. 39, # 12:19, p. 40, # 13:6 and # 13:23, p. 41, and # 14:30, p. 42

3/20 – Confucianism continued

Week 10

3/25 – Confucianism continued, Conferences for Research paper

3/27 – Conferences for Research paper

Week 11

4/1 – Conferences continued

4/3 – Conferences continued

Week 12

4/8 – Research paper due at the beginning of the class, Introduction to Taoism from Wing-Tsit Chan's *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*: Chapter 7: The Natural Way of Lao Tzu, pp. 136-138, Poems from The Lao Tzu (Tao Te Ching): # 2, p. 140, # 4, p. 141, # 8, p. 143, # 11, p. 144, # 22, p. 151, #45, p. 161, and #76, p. 174

4/10 – Taoism continued

Week 13

4/15 – Taoism (continued.), Introduction to Zen Buddhism (material on e-reserve)

4/17 – Zen continued

Week 14

4/22 – Zen Buddhism (continued), Introduction to Shinto Mythology (material on e-reserve)

4/24 – Shinto mythology continued

Week 15

4/29 – continued

5/1 – Review for the Final Exam